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ABSTRACT

A study examined the impact of TV viewing motivations on Lin hsian students' psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Subjects were enrolled in a midsize university in the New England area. TV viewing motivation was measured by A. M. Rubin's TV Viewing Motivations Scale. Psychological adjustment was measured by W. Zung's Self Rating Depression Scale, D. Russell, L. Peplau, and C. Cutrona's Loneliness Scale, and B. Vohlich and J. Martin's Satisfaction Scale. Sociocultural adjustment was measured by A. Furnham and S. Bochner's Social Difficulty Scale. Results from Pearson product-moment correlations and stepwise multiple regression analyses showed relationships between TV viewing motivations and psychological and sociocultural adjustment. For future research on cross-cultural adjustment, participants should not be limited to students but extend to other samples such as business people, diplomats, volunteers, and their spouses. (Contains 40 references and 2 tables of data.) (Author/RS)

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The Impact of TV Viewing Motivations on Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of TV viewing motivations on Asian students' (N = 126) psychological and sociocultural adjustment. TV viewing motivation was measured by Rubin's (1978) TV Viewing Motivations Scale. Psychological adjustment was measured by Zung's (1965) Self Rating Depression Scale, Russell, Replau, and Cutrona's (1980) Loneliness Scale, and Robrlich and Martin's (1991) Satisfaction Scale. Sociocultural adjustment was measured by Furnham and Bochner's (1982) Social Difficulty Scale. Results from Pearson product-moment correlations and stepwise multiple regression analyses showed relationships beweem TV viewing motivations and psychological and sociocultural adjustment.

The Impact of TV Viewing Motivations on Psychological and Sociocultural Adjustment

Since the last two decades research on the role mass communication plays in the process of intercultural adjustment has been growing. Gordon (1974), for example, indicated that media affect an individual's value system, image and stereotype of environment, and the choice of priority concern. The mass communication experiences in the host culture usually fill the interpersonal communication gaps between sojourners and host nationals. Mass communication broadens sojourners' perspective of the host culture by providing information about the host culture (Kim, 1988). Nevertheless, most research in this line focuses on the influence of the use of mass media on the adjustment process of sojourners in the host culture, few research deals with the relationship between motivation of media use and cross-cultural adjustment. This study aimed to explore this area by examining the influence of TV viewing motivation on sojourners' cross-cultural adjustment.

Cross-cultural adjustment refers to the degree of fitness or compatibility of sojourners in a new cultural environment (Kim, 1988). According to Ruben and Kealey (1979), the concept of cross-cultural adjustment consists of three dimensions: cultural shock, psychological adaptation, and interactional effectiveness. Cultural shock relates to the dynamics of cross-cultural adjustment. Research in this area has found that the extent, direction, magnitude, and duration of cultural shock have a significant effect on a person's life during the early stage sojourning in a new environment (Brislin & Pederson, 1976; Furnham, 1986, 1987; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963).

Psychological adaptation relates to the psychological process of acclimating to a new culture. Studies have shown that this process is related to psychological well-being, contention, comfort, and self-satisfaction within a new environment after the stage of culture shock has passed (Berry, Kim, & Boski, 1988; Church, 1982; David, 1972; Dinge & Lieberman, 1989; Ruben & Kealey, 1979; Taft, 1977, 1988). Finally, interactional effectiveness refers to a behavioral perspective which concerns sojourners' social or communication skills to interact with host nationals. Studies have indicated that these communication skills include the ability to impart one's knowledge in order to understand another, the ability to establish interpersonal relationships with host nationals, and other skills like empathy and interaction management (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Barna, 1979; Chen, 1989, 1990; Hammer, 1984; Hammer, Gudykunst, & Wiseman, 1978; Kim, 1988, 1989; Martin & Hammer, 1989; Ruben, 1976; Ruben & Kealey, 1979).

Although much research has been devoted to cross-cultural adjustment study, this expanding field still suffers from a variety of difficulties. For example, Searle and Ward (1990) pointed out that the study of cross-cultural adjustment is plagued by two major problems. First, the field lacks consensus on the theoretical frameworks for investigation and lacks an agreement on definition of key concepts. Second, the field lacks clarity about components that constitute "adjustment." Through a thorough literature review from clinical perspectives, social learning models, and social cognitive approaches to the study of cross-cultural adjustment, Searle and Ward (1990) and Ward and Searle (1991) integrated the construct of cross-cultural adjustment into two categories: psychological dimension and sociocultural component. Psychological dimension refers to feelings of well-being and satisfaction in the host culture, while sociocultural component refers to the ability to adapt to the interactional aspects of the host culture.

Searle and Ward's (1990) study empirically supported the distinction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment. It was suggested that psychological adjustment can be best perceived in the framework of a stress and coping model based on clinical and social learning perspectives, and sociocultural adjustment can be more effectively analyzed in a social learning framework. The study further showed that psychological adjustment is related to sojourners' personality, life changes, and social support variables, and sociocultural adjustment is affected by expectations and

perceived cultural distance, cultural knowledge, and cultural identity. The distinction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment was adopted for the purpose for this study.

The study of TV viewing motivation is based on the uses and gratifications theory which attempts to explain why people use media. The theory includes five assumptions: (1) people actively seek out media to satisfy their needs, (2) people use media to fulfill expectations, (3) people actively choose media and media content, (4) people know and can state their own motivations for using media, and (5) understanding the underlying motives of media use is the key to the explanation of the cultural significance of media content (Infante, Rancer, & Womack, 1993). TV viewing not only provides sojourners information of the host culture, but also helps sojourners in the process of adjustment. Gordon (1964), for example, indicated that media exert a powerful influence on immigrant's acculturation to the host culture. Shibutani and Kwan (1965) pointed out that the degree of acculturation for members of minority group is dependent on the extent of their media exposure. Other studies by Greenberg, Burgoon, Burgoon, and Korzenny (1983), and Kim (1977, 1978) as well supported the adaptive function of host media to sojourners.

Why do people watch TV? Scholars identified many reasons such as loneliness, shyness, relaxation, procrastination, excitement, diversion, or simply because there is nothing better to do (Greenberg, 1974; Johnsson-Smaragi, 1983). Anderson (1982) concluded that most people watch TV programs to drive away boredom, kill time, or entertain themselves. However, according to Finn and Gorr (1988), there are two different sources of TV viewing motivations based on certain needs: mood management viewing and social compensation viewing. Mood management viewing includes the motivations of relaxation, entertainment, arousal, and information. Whereas social compensation viewing includes the motivations of companionship, pass time, habit, and escape. All of these were clearly shown in Rubin (1979, 1983, 1985) studies that identified reasons why people use television: for learning, for habit, for passing time, for companionship, to forget or escape, for excitement or arousal, and for relaxation.

Rubin (1984) further identified two types of television viewers. The first type viewers are time-consuming information seekers who watch television for ritualized purpose. People of this type are viewing television more frequently and have high regard for television. The second type of viewers are non-habitual entertainment-information seekers who watch television for instrumental purpose. People of this group watch television primarily for receiving information, and they are more selective and goal oriented. Although the two types of TV viewers are different, TV viewing motivations for viewers of the two groups function similarly with one another to produce certain patterns of media gratifications, and can further predict watching patterns, behaviors and attitudes, and consequences of TV use (Rubin, 1983).

Applying to cross-cultural setting, we predicted that the TV viewing motivations of the sojourners would affect their adjustment process in the host culture. The present study examined a range of TV viewing motivations of sojourners in relationship to psychological and sociocultural adjustment. It was hypothesized that TV viewing motivations including learning, passing time, companionship, forget or escape, excitement or arousal, and relaxation would predict psychological adjustment as assessed by sojourners' feelings of well-being and satisfaction in the host culture. It was also hypothesized that these TV viewing motivations will predict sociocultural adjustment as assessed by sojourners' ability to adapt to interactive aspects of the host culture.

Method

Subjects and Procedures

One hundred and twenty six Asian students enrolling in a midsize university at New England area participated in the study. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed the students. Of the 200 questionnaires, 132 (66%) were returned to the researcher. Six questionnaires were not completed;

therefore, 126 subjects were included in the present study. Of the sample, 93 were males and 33 were females. The average age of the subjects was 27.1. Fifty three of the subjects were married, and 71 were not married. Two subjects did not report their marital status.

Measurement

In order to measure TV viewing motivations Rubin's (1979) TV viewing motivation scales were used in this study. The instrument consists of eight categories: relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, learning things, learning for myself, arouse, and escape. The coefficients of Cronbach's alpha for these categories ranged from .67 to .84.

Psychological adjustment was measured by three instruments: Zung's (1965) Self-Rating Depression Scale, Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona's (1980) Loneliness Scale, and Rohrlich and Martin's (1991) Satisfaction Scale. These scales have been found reliable by these authors. The alpha coefficients of these scales in this study were .79 for the Self-Rating Depression Scale, .93 for the Loneliness Scale, and .78 for the Satisfaction Scale.

Finally, sociocultural adjustment was measured by Furhnam and Bocher's (1982) 10-item scale which contains ten of the most difficult situations sojourners have encountered when communicating with the host nationals. The scale has been validated for use with international students (Chen, 1992, 1993). The alpha coefficients of the scale in this study was .80.

Results

The primary object of this study was to examine the influence of TV viewing motivations on psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Pearson Product correlation and multiple regressions were performed to fulfill this purpose. Table 1 reports the correlations of the variables. The results indicate that depression was significantly correlated with companionship ($r = .28$), habit ($r = -.27$), and learning things ($r = -.23$); loneliness was significantly correlated with companionship ($r = .41$), habit ($r = -.31$), learning things ($r = .18$), and escape ($r = .22$); satisfaction was significantly correlated with habit ($r = .35$); and social difficulty was significantly correlated with arouse ($r = .22$), and escape ($r = -.18$). The probability for all these correlations were lower than .05 level.

Insert Table 1 About Here

To find out which of the components of TV viewing motivation best predicts various dimensions of psychological and social adjustment, stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted. Each of the four dimensions of psychological and sociocultural adjustment was regressed onto the dimensions of TV viewing motivation. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 About Here

The results show that depression was best predicted by companionship, habit, and learning things. Loneliness was best predicted by companionship, habit, learning myself, and escape. Satisfaction was best predicted by habit. And social difficulty was best predicted by arouse and escape.

Discussion

The present study assessed the impact of TV viewing motivations on psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Viewing for companionship had a positive effect while viewing for habit and for learning things had negative effects on depression. Viewing for companionship and for escape had positive effects while viewing for habit and for learning myself had negative effects on

loneliness. Viewing for habit also had a positive effect on satisfaction. Lastly, viewing for arouse had a positive effect while viewing for escape had a negative effect on social difficulty.

Previous research has shown the important role media play in the process of cultural adjustment. The present study further examined the impact of TV viewing motivation and found its impact on the process of cultural adjustment. The results of this study may shed light on the uses and gratifications theory.

Finally, three concerns of this study should be noted. First, although the response rate (66%) is moderate high, the design of this study was one-shot survey research. For the examination of cultural adjustment, the longitudinal research is strongly recommended for future research which allows to observe the adjustment process over time. Second, the composition of the participants was diverse in this study. Participants were from different Asian countries. People from different cultures may show various ways in the process of cultural adjustment, and this will likely affect the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments used in the study. For future research the culture specific approach should be tested. Lastly, the participants in this study were limited in the category of students. Future research on cross-cultural adjustment should extend to include samples such as business people, diplomats, volunteers, and their spouses.

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Table 1
Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Variables

Variables	Depression	Loneliness	Satisfaction	Difficulty
Relaxation	-.12	-.07	.06	.01
Companionship	.28*	.41*	-.13	-.01
Habit	-.27*	-.31*	.35*	.04
Pass Time	-.01	.16	.09	-.09
Learning Things	-.23*	.18*	.10	.11
Learning Myself	-.08	-.20*	.08	.07
Arouse	-.08	-.06	.17	.22*
Escape	.15	.22*	.06	-.18*

Note. N = 126. * $p < .05$.

Table 2
Summary of Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

Sources of Variation	R	R	F	P	beta
1. Depression					
Companionship	.27	.07	9.70	.01	.27
Habit	.39	.15	10.72	.01	-.28
Learning Thing	.45	.20	10.41	.01	-.24
2. Loneliness					
Companionship	.38	.14	20.38	.01	.38
Habit	.50	.25	20.19	.01	-.33
Learning Myself	.54	.29	16.80	.01	-.22
Escape	.58	.34	15.31	.01	.22
3. Satisfaction					
Habit	.30	.09	12.37	.01	.30
4. Difficulty					
Arouse	.22	.05	6.03	.05	.22
Escape	.35	.12	8.45	.01	-.30

Note. N = 126.